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Ted Patrick, starter of deprogramming, faces sex charges

by Ted Agres
NEWS WORLD WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Ted Patrick, founder of the practice of "deprogramming" converts of new religions, was indicted yesterday by a grand jury in Ohio on six counts of sexual battery and three counts of kidnapping, abduction and assault against a 20-year-old woman.

Patrick, who was out on bail at the time of the alleged crimes, is at present serving a one-year prison term in San Diego from a previous conviction on kidnapping charges relating to deprogramming.

San Diego law enforcement officials said they expected to receive extradition papers from Ohio shortly.

"Deprogramming" is a widely condemned practice of forcing an individual to renounce his or her religious belief and has been applied mainly to members of the "new religions." But converts to older, established religions have also been targets of deprogramming.

Ted Patrick

The practice of deprograming has been condemned by the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council of Churches and many other religious organizations.

A grand jury, sitting in Hamilton County, Ohio, yesterday handed down a nine-count indictment against Patrick and three other

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PATRICK

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individuals for allegedly kidnapping and sexually abusing Stephaine Riethmiller.

What makes the case particularly unusual, officials said, is that Miss Riethmiller was not a member of a religious group. Rather, her parents reportedly were upset because they thought their daughter was having a relationship with her "roommate," identified as Patricia Thiemann.

The parents allegedly hired Patrick for $8,000 for his "services" to deprogram their daughter from her relationship with the woman.

Also named in the indictment were James Roe of San Diego, Naomi Kelley Goff, of Leesburg, Ala., and a man identified only as "Ray." The mother, Marita Riethmiller, has reportedly been granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for her agreeing to tesrify against Patrick and the others.

Five-year sentence

According to Ray Cameron, a forensic consultant to the San Diego district attorney's office, Patrick was convicted in October, 1980, on kidnapping charges in San Diego and was given a five-year prison sentence suspended to one year in county jail and five years probation. At the time of the alleged Ohio kidnapping, Patrick was out on bail pending an appeal to the appelate court in California, Cameron said.

"We petitioned our court to revoke his bail, which they did, and the court probably will condsider a probation revocation hearing as well after other charges are made known," Cameron said.

Miss Riethmiller was reportedly kidnapped from Ohio and taken to Alabama where she was allegedly held against her will and sexually abused during the attempted "deprogramming."